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Migration Opportunity Map Project (MOMP)



(28 page .pdf)

Migrants Rights News ~ No: 12

Welcome to the November 2008 edition of Migrants Rights News

The Migrants Rights Network is working for a rights-based approach to migration, with migrants as full partners in developing the policies and procedures which affect life in the UK. Migrants Rights News aims to inform our members and other groups working on migration issues about regional and national policy developments, campaign news, recent research and upcoming events.

At the Heart of Migrants Rights News are the campaigns and strategies being developed by migrants to consolidate their position in British society. We focus on activities that extend the scope of the human, economic and social rights which apply to migrants' circumstances.

We would be happy to circulate information and bulletins sent by members in the following month's newsletter, subject to editorial/space limitations! Please send any contributions to: info@migrantsrights.org.uk.

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(1) Parliamentary Prayer urged around New Changes to Immigration Rules

The Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA) has urged both Houses of Parliament to 'pray' against a new [Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules](#); in early November David Cameron, leader of the Conservative party led opposition to the Statement of Changes by lodging [Early Day Motion 2448](#), praying against the Statement of Changes. A 'prayer' gives the opportunity for the new measures to be scrutinised, debated and possibly amended by Parliament, rather than automatically entering the Immigration Rules on 25th - 27th November 2008.

Implementation of Tiers 2 and 5

Provisions detailed in the new Statement of Changes would implement Tier 2 (for skilled migrants with a job offer) and Tier 5 (temporary migrants and Youth Mobility Scheme) of the new Points-Based System (PBS) from 27th November. Under the new system, migrants entering under new Tiers 2 and 5 would be required to have Certificate of Sponsorship from a registered UK sponsor (an employer or, in the case of the Youth Mobility Scheme, their Government) before being approved. UK employers who wish to become a registered sponsor would first have to demonstrate their honesty and capability to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) through an audit process, and thereafter would be required to report key details about migrant workers to UKBA.

In a [statement](#) released on 5th November for Parliamentary consideration, ILPA has pointed out the lack of public faith in the system of employer sponsorship. It has been possible for employers to register as sponsors since early 2008, but [Home Office records](#) on 16th October indicated that just 745 British employers had registered as sponsors by that date. Despite UKBA claims that the new measures will benefit employers, ILPA argues

that they are likely only to advantage the immigration authorities. In fact new measures will make the process of taking on skilled or temporary migrants from abroad significantly more bureaucratic, costly and difficult for employers.

Concerns for migrants' rights under the new system have also prompted the call for a prayer. Although they would have to prove the ability to monitor workers' immigration status, under the new provisions employers would not be required to demonstrate a good track record of meeting health and safety or minimum wage standards in order to become a registered sponsor. This indicates that concerns about the welfare of migrant workers under Tiers 2 and 5 have played little part in development of these provisions. Application requirements for migrants, including the need to prove they have sufficient (and substantial) 'maintenance' funds to support themselves in the UK, are also likely to make it more difficult for people from poorer countries to qualify for entry under Tiers 2 and 5.

Removal of Immigration Routes including Working Holidaymaker Scheme

In addition to implementing PBS Tiers 2 and 5, the Statement of Changes would delete 12 existing immigration routes, including those for Private Servants in Diplomatic Households; Retired Persons of Independent Means and the Working Holidaymakers Scheme. A further 14 concessionary routes, including BUNAC (British Universities North America Club), the Japan Youth Exchange Scheme and the Gap Year Entrants Scheme would also be removed.

The changes have caused particular concern around the implications for Commonwealth citizens, in particular those from the 'New Commonwealth' (African and Asian) countries. The Working Holidaymaker Scheme, currently open to Commonwealth citizens between 17 and 30 years old for a maximum two-year stay in the UK, will close from 27th November. The Tier 5 'Youth Mobility Scheme' would instead enable young people to work in the UK for a maximum of two years, but would be restricted to citizens of 'accepted' countries which the UK considers 'trustworthy'. Under the current Statement of Changes, only young people from Australia, Japan, Canada and New Zealand

would be eligible to apply, and youth from all 'new Commonwealth' countries will cease to be eligible. This will particularly impact on young South Africans, Indians and Ghanaians, all of which have made up a significant proportion of applicants under the Working Holidaymaker Scheme in recent years, according to [Hansard records](#).

The impact of proposals under the Statement of Changes on diplomatic domestic servants has also caused alarm among [campaigners](#) working for the rights of migrant domestic workers. Although the Government has agreed to provide a concession outside the Points-Based System for migrant domestic workers generally, the Statement of Changes would mean that domestic workers for diplomats would not benefit from the concession.

ILPA urges any individual or organisation with concerns about the impact of the Statement of Changes to contact their MPs or other Parliamentary contacts in order to gather signatures on Early Day Motion 2448.

(2) MRN Launches Research into Government's 'Civil Penalty Regime'

MRN's report into the 'civil penalty regime' - a new Government measure increasing employers' responsibilities for the immigration status of their workers - will be launched at a debate in Parliament on 11th November.

In February 2008 the Government launched its civil penalty regime directed against employers employing undocumented migrant workers. On-the-spot fines of up to £10,000 per worker can now be levied on any employer who has failed to adequately check the immigration status of their workers, and is later found to be employing undocumented migrants. The new measures have been accompanied by an increase in UK Border Agency enforcement measures, including workplace raids and fines issued.

"Papers Please" - The Impact of the Government's Civil Penalty Regime on the Employment Rights of Migrant Workers' is an introductory mapping report, which highlights experiences of migrants in the workplace as a result of the new measures. Case studies

recorded in the report indicate that the civil penalty regime has had detrimental effects on many migrant workers, both as a result of many employers' inability to accurately and fairly confirm their workers' right to work, and in some cases through employers' unfair use of the checks against migrant workers. Incidents reported highlight the impact on diverse groups of migrants, cases of discrimination and employers' targeting of unionised workers for document checks in order to disrupt collective action. The report highlights serious concerns that the pressure on employers may erode future employment opportunities for migrant workers and BME British citizens in the UK.

This event will be of keen interest to individuals and organisations concerned with the employment of migrants. The event will be chaired by Dr Sonia McKay of the Working Lives Research Institute, London Metropolitan University, and panellists will include Jon Cruddas, MP, Jack Dromey (Unite the Union) and Ruth Grove-White (Migrants' Rights Network). The audience will also hear from Shailesh Gaglani (GMB Shop Steward at Katsouris and Branch President) and Kingsley Egbunu, who will share their experiences of workplace checks and raids since February 2008. As well as contributions from the platform speakers there will be opportunities for members of the audience to contribute their views and experiences around the impacts of the civil penalty regime.

(3) Migrants used as 'Guinea Pigs' for Controversial ID Card Scheme

The UK Border Agency has announced that roll out of the controversial '[National Identity scheme](#)' will begin this month, by issuing ID cards to specified categories of migrants from outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

From 25th November, foreign students and migrants travelling on marriage visas - immigration categories which have, [according to UKBA](#), been most targeted by 'abusers' of the system in the past - will be issued with an ID card when entering the UK. The plastic cards, holding a chip containing personal details, digital image, fingerprints and immigration status, will act as a form of residence permit and are intended to soon

replace the traditional stickers and stamps in the passports of legally resident foreign nationals. Details held on the ID cards will also be collected and stored on a national identity database.

UKBA intends that within three years all migrants applying for leave to enter or remain in the UK will be required to apply for a card and that around 90% foreign nationals will hold an ID card by 2014/5. MRN is extremely concerned about the implications of the scheme for the rights and freedoms of migrants in the UK, in particular in relation to the European Convention on Human Rights Article 8 (the right to private and family life). The ID card scheme is intended to complement Home Office plans for on-the-spot examination of people in the UK as laid out in the new draft (partial) Immigration and Citizenship Bill, and to enable the restriction of access to public services and benefits to migrants who have not 'earned' them. The system risks discriminating against migrants by providing them with a form of ID which the British public is not yet required to carry, as well as introducing potential disadvantages for migrants who have not been issued with an ID card.

The Government also intends that the controversial 'civil penalty regime' - new responsibilities for UK employers to monitor the immigration status of their employees - will be supported as the card will provide clearer proof for employers about migrants' right to work. Given the reported negative impact of the civil penalty regime on migrant workers' rights since February 2008, MRN is concerned that the scheme would be likely to lead to discrimination against migrants who do not hold an ID card but who are legally entitled to seek employment.

The wider scheme precedes the wider introduction of the scheme for the British public, as [Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, Chris Huhne, commented](#): "*The Government is using vulnerable members of our society, like foreign nationals who do not have the vote, as guinea pigs for a deeply unpopular and unworkable policy.*" From 2009, ID cards will be required for British citizens working in 'sensitive' areas such as airline and airport employees, rolling out as an option for

young Britons in 2010 and the general population in 2011. The introduction of ID cards remains unpopular among a significant proportion of the UK population, with a recent [YouGov/Economist poll](#) indicating that 45% of the public believe that the benefits of the scheme would not justify the invasion of privacy.

MRN will continue to monitor the impact of the introduction of compulsory ID cards for migrants, with the aim of documenting the impact of the scheme. As such we urge network members to inform us about any issues in relation to ID cards emerging after 25th November .

4) Migration, Demography and Recession fire up CBI Migration Summit Debates

The impact of the Government's new Points-Based System (PBS) for immigration, within a context of financial crisis and impending recession, was hotly debated at the CBI Migration Summit held during October.

The annual Confederation of British Industry (CBI) Migration Summit on 28th October 2008 enabled leading firms employing migrant labour, as well as ministers, to review progress on the implementation of the PBS, as well as the wider positioning of immigration policy during a serious economic downturn. The PBS aims to replace around 80 work and study immigration routes to the UK with a '5-tier' system assessing migrants on their ability to attain required points for skills and attributes identified by the Government as needed by the UK. The Government has repeatedly resisted calls to introduce additional set caps or quotas into the immigration system - the PBS aims to direct immigration policy according to the needs of the UK economy rather than to manipulate the UK population demographic.

Phil Woolas MP, the UK Immigration Minister since replacing Liam Byrne MP during a cabinet reshuffle at the beginning of October, presented the Government perspective at the CBI Summit. Since his appointment, Woolas has drawn attention by appearing to move the Government position on immigration closer towards that of the Conservative party, which has a fixed cap on immigration at the centre of

its policy. In an [interview with The Times](#) during October Woolas controversially stated "*we have to have a population policy and that means at some point we will be able to set a limit on migration. This Government isn't going to allow the population of this country to go up to 70 million*".

At the CBI Migration Summit, Woolas again focused his comments on the reduction of immigrants to the UK, and claimed the Government wanted to communicate to readers of The Sun over the issue. He insisted that the Government could more flexibly and effectively limit immigration through the PBS, rather than setting a fixed cap on immigrants and pointed out that, had the PBS been operating one year ago, 12% fewer immigrants would have been admitted during the course of the current year. Woolas received criticism from the Chair of the Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA), Sophie Barrett-Brown, who accused the Government of misleading the public over the design and impact of the PBS in the UK.

The Conservative Home Affairs spokesperson, Dominic Grieve, disputed Woolas' claims that the PBS alone could successfully manage migration impacts on the UK population, calling for immigration policies that clearly intended to reduce the role of migration in population growth. To do this properly the PBS would need to be supplemented by the introduction of a cap on the total number of migrants to be admitted in any one year. He brushed aside objections from the floor that this would limit the capacity of UK employers to recruit the workers they needed, saying that a balance had to be struck between business interests and the need to contain population growth to acceptable levels.

Further perspectives presented the complexity of economic migration to the UK. Trevor Phillips pointed out that the flexibility of migrant labour meant that the economic downturn was in itself leading to the return of many migrants (particularly from Eastern Europe) to their home countries. This position was supported by Lucy Neville-Rolfe of Tesco who pointed out that, as UK unemployment rises, many migrants will continue to return home of their own volition.

Pat McFadden MP, Minister for Employment Relations and Postal Affairs, argued that the UK benefits from migration and that these benefits are not expected to diminish during the anticipated economic recession. He pointed out that economic migration provides a flexible way of matching the need for skilled workers with the supply provided by global labour markets. Important sectors of the economy make extensive use of the labour provided by migrants, within the banking and finance, construction, social care and agriculture sectors and, whilst an active programme of training aimed to assist British citizens getting into work, the Government expected that the economy would still need to recruit migrants to fill gaps and shortages.

5) MRN seeks Treasurer

MRN is currently looking for a **Treasurer** to serve on our Executive Committee (Board of Trustees) and to liaise with its secretariat in London. The ideal candidate will have a background in accountancy, preferably within the charity or not-for profit sector and will have a serious commitment to the aims of the MRN.

MRN has a very active and diverse Board of Trustees which is currently made up of seven members who are responsible for the overall management of the organisation. The Board is supported by a Policy Advisory Group and these two bodies together provide representation from across England, Scotland and Wales, further enabling the MRN to meet the needs of its network members. The Treasurer will be a member of the Board of Trustees and will exercise governance responsibility for the financial health of the charity, reporting on this at intervals to the Board.

We are looking for somebody with a strong knowledge of financial management, who would be willing to commit on a voluntary basis to this exciting role for a minimum of one year. If you think that this somebody could be you and would like to express your interest please send a cover letter along with your CV at info@migrantsrights.org.uk. To learn more about the key responsibilities that this role involves, please read full job specification

available for download on our website at
www.migrantsrights.org.uk/opportunities.htm.

Closing date for applications: **Friday 12th
December 2008.**

(6) Reports and Research

- **No Place Like Home? Addressing the Issues of Housing and Migration - Shelter and the Trades Union Congress (TUC), October 2008.**

Addressing housing problems of migrants and asylum seekers is one of the most important challenges for the modern social policy. Undoubtedly, housing issues in the context of international migration require more attention both from the state and civil society. To provide a forum for an in-depth policy debate, Shelter and the TUC held the seminar and launched a new discussion paper, *No Place Like Home?*, seeking to clarify the current situation as well as suggest options for reform. The discussion paper findings suggest that an appropriate supply of affordable housing is essential to community cohesion. If it is in short supply or is in poor condition, the tensions will arise between those competing for scarce resources. The crisis in affordability combined with underinvestment in social housing over decades has resulted in a shortage of affordable homes in many parts of the country - demonstrating that the market alone cannot meet the high demand for housing from both the resident population and new migrants. The discussion paper specifies that community cohesion and the integration of migrants needs to be addressed in the context of the overall need to tackle the shortage of good quality affordable homes. For the foreseeable future, the UK will operate a system of managed migration. According to the discussion paper, there must be a strategic Governmental approach towards planning and managing the housing and welfare needs of those who come to the UK, as well as those already resident.

(7) Upcoming Events

- **London City of Sanctuary launch event, 7pm, 12th November, St Martin's Hall, St-Martin-in-the-Fields, London WC2**

City of Sanctuary is a movement to build a culture of hospitality for people seeking sanctuary in the UK. Our goal is to create a network of towns and cities throughout the country which are proud to be places of safety, and which include people seeking sanctuary fully in the life of their communities. Many people are now familiar with the idea of a 'Fairtrade City', in which a wide range of community groups and organisations make a commitment to using and selling fairtrade goods. In a similar way a 'City of Sanctuary' is a place where a broad range of local businesses, organisations, community groups and faith communities, as well as local government, are publicly committed to welcoming and including people seeking sanctuary. The City of Sanctuary movement began in Sheffield and there are now active groups all around the country. Now the movement is coming to London. The event will involve performance, music and speakers. This event is for anyone interested in developing the City of Sanctuary movement in London, or just keen to find out more.

- **Launch of New Research on Chinese Migration, 14th November 2008, Middlesex University, Hendon Campus, The Burroughs, NW4, Lunch 12.30pm - 1.30pm, Speakers and discussion, 1.30pm - 4.30pm**

Contact Professor Rosemary Sales:
r.sales@mdx.ac.uk / 020 8411 5497 for further details or to attend.

Middlesex University is holding an event to launch the reports of two recent research projects, Cityscapes of Diaspora: Images and Realities of London's Chinatown funded by the AHRC and The Changing Chinese Community in London: New migration new needs.

These projects have raised a large number of important questions for community organisations, researchers and policy. As well as presenting the main findings from the projects, the event will include discussion of the policy implications of the projects.

The event will be held at the university's Hendon Campus, close to Hendon Central underground station. It will be attended by members of Chinese community organisations, researchers and others with an interest in the Chinese population in London. Summaries of the reports will be available on the day and the full reports will be obtainable on the university website after the launch. The formal meeting will be preceded by lunch.

- **Managing economic migration and its impacts, Institute for Employment Studies Annual Public Employment Policy Conference 2008, 19 November 2008, 10.00am - 4.00pm, London Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London, W1K 6JP**

Increases in migration and new patterns of mobility have had profound consequences for the UK at the national, regional and local levels. In response to these, the UK government has increasingly sought to manage migration in order to maximise economic benefit to the UK, while minimising associated challenges. The IES Annual Public Employment Policy Conference will provide an opportunity to hear expert evidence on the impacts of migration, both on the labour market and more widely; engage with speakers and fellow delegates to discuss this evidence; and reflect on the latest policy developments regarding a managed migration system. The keynote address will be from Professor David Metcalf CBE, Chair of the Migration Advisory Committee.

- **'Migrant Workers in the Economy: Rights and Responsibilities', Open debate, Thursday 20th November 2008, 4.30-6.00 p.m. Friends House (Small Meeting House), 173 Euston**

Road, London NW1 2BJ

Contact Miles Litvinoff for more information: miles.litvinoff@eccr.org.uk

Migrant workers now make up a significant proportion of the UK workforce. But they are one of the most vulnerable groups of workers, and their employment rights are commonly abused. As a society we have a responsibility to ensure that migrant workers are treated fairly. State agencies, companies, investors, trade unions, churches, community organisations and individual citizens and all have a part to play. Issues include: how much does the UK economy depend on migrant labour and in which sectors? What can we learn from good and bad practices in delivering migrant workers' rights? What are the supply chain issues? What responsibilities lie with which actors in society and the economy? What are the views of migrant workers themselves? To explore these issues, the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility is bringing together speakers from government, business, the trade unions, a migrant worker project, and the Church, with an audience of faith-based and responsible investors, corporate responsibility practitioners, justice and peace groups, and other members of civil society.

- **'The Illegals: First-hand testimonies from undocumented migrants living and working in London' 21st November 2008, 1 pm. Iceandfire Theatre Company.**

This project, scripted by Christine Bacon and funded by the **City Parochial Foundation**, will be launching at the Soho Theatre London on 21st November. The script comprises of first-hand accounts of undocumented migrants living and working in London. As the name of the project suggests, this particular category of migrants is both derided and misunderstood. iceandfire hopes that this play will contribute to increased public pressure for regularisation of the status of some

500,000 undocumented migrants currently living in precarious circumstances by virtue of being outside of any formal system. iceandfire was founded in 2003 by playwright Sonja Linden inspired by her seven years as writer in residence at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. The company sees theatre as the natural medium to communicate stories that make real and relevant the impact of human rights issues on our everyday lives; a dedicated space to explore and understand stories of interrupted lives of ordinary people; ordinary people who have become extraordinary because of what they have had to witness and endure. iceandfire believes in the importance of giving a platform to stories that are often passed over or ignored, hoping to create empathy, understanding and fraternity. If you would like further information about this project, or if you would like to attend the launch, please email illegals@iceandfire.co.uk.

- **Conference: Understanding the Issues around Forced Marriages: 17 days of action to end violence against women, 26th November 2008, Stirling Council, Old Viewford, Stirling**
Contact Maya Varyani : 01786 443465 / varyanim@stirling.gov.uk

Stirling Council is organising a conference to explore key aspects of forced marriages. Topics to be addressed will include the impact of education on arranged and forced marriages, cultural perspectives on forced marriages and the impact on mental health of forced marriages. Presentations will be given by Home Office representatives, NGOs and academic researchers on the subject.

- **Training: Issues faced by lesbian and gay asylum seekers when claiming asylum in the UK, UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group, Friday 28th November 2008, 1.30 - 4.30pm. 32-36 Loman Street, London**

The course is aimed at people, in the

voluntary sector or in the private sector, who work with and support lesbian and gay asylum seekers. It aims to raise awareness of the issues faced by lesbian and gay asylum seekers, and to equip participants with an understanding of how to best support lesbian and gay asylum seekers while they go through the asylum process. Topics to be covered include: What is sexuality? What are the issues faced by lesbian and gay asylum seekers in their home countries? Overview of the asylum process; Why are lesbian and gay asylum seekers refused asylum in the UK? What are the specific issues faced by lesbian and gay asylum seekers when they claim asylum in the UK? The role of voluntary and community groups in supporting lesbian and gay asylum seekers; A lesbian or gay asylum seeker may give their account on the day. Fee: Community and voluntary sector £49.00 per person. Private sector £99.00 per person; Maximum 12 participants per course.

- **Charity Event: An evening of film, dance, singing and poetry to raise awareness about people who have had to seek asylum in Britain, Friday 28th November 2008, 7pm, St John's United Reformed Church, Cowper Street, Ipswich**
Contact Melissa Day: 01473 434683

The evening will be specifically looking at what happens to refugees' identities when making the transition from their home country into British culture and society. The evening will be a mix of different art forms of communication including items by Mr Gee - a gifted poet who has recently been performing in "*Into the Hoods*" at the Novello Theatre, London; Godiva Apedo - a talented dancer from the original cast of the Lion King; Ele Scott - who loves contemporary dance and is lead singer with the Suffolk band '*The Pursuit*'; Nawroz Oramari - a Kurdish singer who incorporates many different languages into his lyrical work; Mqhubeli Timbha - a refugee from Zimbabwe; Jackie Rigden - an active volunteer visitor to centres in London who

will be speaking about the process of seeking asylum and trying to unravel the meaning of terms used by the media.
Tickets: £5.00 incl. light refreshments.

- **Undocumented Children in Europe Conference, PICUM Brussels, 22nd - 23rd January 2009**

This conference, organized within the framework of the EU project "Fighting discrimination-based violence against undocumented children in Europe", will provide an opportunity to investigate the specific needs and problems that undocumented children face in Europe when trying to access their basic social rights. The event will enable participants to share experiences and good practices regarding the provision of protection to undocumented children.

Draft program and registration form are available on PICUM's website (<http://www.picum.org>). Registration € 15 (including lunch & refreshments) is open until 03 January 2009.

(8) Other Announcements

- **Equality and Human Rights Commission launches Inquiry into Meat Processing Sectors in England and Wales - October 2008**

For more information contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission Media Office on 02031170255, out of hours 07767272818.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has announced the launch of a formal Inquiry into the employment and recruitment practices in the meat processing sectors in England and Wales during October 2008. The Inquiry will look into differences in the pay and conditions of agency and temporary workers who undertake the same jobs as employees with permanent or directly-employed status. Due to their agency or temporary status, many of them lack the legal protection afforded to permanent or self-employed workers. The Inquiry will also consider the wider implications of

changes to the status of agency or temporary workers. Evidence obtained by the Commission suggests the meat processing sector is characterised by low pay, and has become reliant on agency and migrant workers. On average, agency staff receive lower normal and overtime pay than their permanent colleagues and have different holiday and sick pay entitlements. The Inquiry will gather evidence from individuals, meat processing companies, agency labour providers and other organisations over the next six months. The Commission will also be commissioning independent research. At the end of the Inquiry the Commission will report its findings and make recommendations on how to improve the terms and conditions for certain migrant and agency workers in the meat processing sector where there is found to be poor practice.

**UN-INSTRAW Virtual Discussion
'Creating Gender Sensitive Migration
Policy: Best Practices and Lessons
Learned', 3rd November to 21st
November.**

The discussion will bring together policy makers, government officials, financial experts, academics, and representatives from international organizations and NGOs to discuss how migration policy can promote development and the advancement of women. Specifically we will be looking at gender sensitive banking and co-development policies. The discussion aims to compile best practices and lessons learned for migration and development policy, with an emphasis on gender sensitive policies and to establish a virtual community for ongoing discussion and the sharing of resources. The Virtual Discussion will be held in English, conducted via email and moderated by UN-INSTRAW. This Virtual Discussion is based on the previously discussion "Gender, Migration, Remittances and Development: Towards a Participatory Research Framework," where participants expressed the need for sound migration policies to harness the potential of migration for development

and for the empowerment of women.
For more information please see the
Concept Note available at
[http://www.un-
instraw.org/images/files/ConceptNote.pdf](http://www.un-instraw.org/images/files/ConceptNote.pdf).
To confirm your participation please send
an email to Laura Olsen at: [lolsen@un-
instraw.org](mailto:lolsen@un-instraw.org).

- **Preston Women's Refuge funded for project supporting female immigrants trapped in violent marriages**

As reported in the Lancashire Evening Post: the Preston-based refuge is already supporting two victims of domestic violence and has reportedly received 30 phone calls from other immigrants in just four weeks. The free and confidential service, offered in English, Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu, is thought to be the first service of its kind offered by a Women's Aid organisation. If a woman with insecure immigration status leaves an abusive relationship, they have no recourse to public funds. This means they are unable to access statutory help for housing under the Housing Act, housing costs or day to day living expenses.

Many refuges are unable to accommodate women and children in these situations as they are unable to claim housing benefit or claim living expenses. Many women we support are married to or have relationship with a man who is a British citizen or who has settled status to reside in the UK. Many of the women have children who are British Citizens, but none of these women have rights to public funds. "As a result many women are trapped with a violent partner. They have a choice: stay in the relationship and risk their lives or leave and face deportation and destitution." Preston Women's Refuge offers advice and information on issues such as entry clearance matters, nationality and citizenship matters and EU and EEA immigration law. To access a full version of this LEP article, visit:
<http://www.lep.co.uk/news/Help-for-immigrant-victims-of.4633554.jp>

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